



## Office of the Mayor-President

City of Baton Rouge  
Parish of East Baton Rouge

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MELVIN L. "KIP" HOLDEN  
Mayor-President

April 29, 2009

The Honorable William Cassidy  
United States House of Representatives  
506 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-1806

Dear Congressman Cassidy: <sup>Bill</sup>

**The Baton Rouge Loop is a high priority for the City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge, and I ask your support and assistance in obtaining funding through the transportation reauthorization.**

Traffic congestion in Baton Rouge, ever worsening as the City-Parish grows and expands, has a significant impact on the quality of life and environment for my constituents and yours, and is also a major obstacle to the long term economic competitiveness of the region. Although Baton Rouge is the 67<sup>th</sup> largest city in the nation, we rank 14<sup>th</sup> in peak travel time congestion. Something must be done to improve mobility and reduce congestion, and not only for our residents, but also for freight movement along Interstate 10, a nationally significant trade corridor, as well as I-12 and I-110.

The Baton Rouge Loop - an 85-mile long, Interstate-Grade, tolled, roadway loop around the Baton Rouge metropolitan area - will provide badly needed bypass options for both Interstate and local traffic, enhancing regional and national mobility, trade and commerce. The Loop will save over six million hours of annual time lost due to congestion, preserving and enhancing regional competitiveness, the climate for economic development, and quality of life.

**The total cost to complete environmental review and design is \$25,000,000. The City-Parish's request for \$20,000,000 therefore represents 80% of the total cost. The City-Parish will provide the non-federal match. This request will advance Baton Rouge to the stage where the City-Parish can seek a public-private partnership or other innovative financing to build out the Loop.**

In addition, the City-Parish has and will continue to follow all relevant environmental and public participation requirements throughout the process. The project is currently completing the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and will proceed through the Tier II EIS and the NEPA process to a Record of Decision, with public outreach and involvement integral to the process at each stage. In conjunction with the Tier I EIS, two rounds of open house workshops were held to inform the public about the project and obtain public feedback in identifying constraints and

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modifying proposed corridors. The BR Loop Executive Committee also held monthly meetings in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council Chambers and other locations in Baton Rouge during the Implementation Plan phase of the project. Open to the public and media, these meetings were well-attended and allowed the Project Team to provide updates on the project.

For all these reasons, and given the importance of the project to local, regional and national mobility, I am pleased to offer my strong support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kip", with a horizontal line above the letters.

Melvin L. "Kip" Holden  
Mayor-President